

REMARKS

There are now pending in this application claims 1 and 3-12, of which claims 1, 4, 8, and 12 are independent. Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice or waiver of its subject matter. Claim 12 is newly added.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

Applicant has made certain formal amendments to the specification to improve upon its grammar and readability. In so doing, no new matter has been entered. Favorable consideration and entry of those amendments is respectfully sought.

Applicant acknowledges, with appreciation, the Examiner's indication that claims 10 and 11 are allowed, and that claims 2-7 and 9 recite patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. As the Examiner will appreciate, and as explained below, the Examiner's comments have taken into consideration with the regard to the following amendments.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 2, and claim 2 has been cancelled. Thus, claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

Dependent claim 4 has been rewritten into independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1, placing claim 4 in allowable form.

Independent claim 8 has been amended, like claim 1, to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 2. Claim 8 is therefore in condition for allowance.

Lastly, new independent claim 12 is directed to an image forming apparatus and corresponds to the sheet transport apparatus recited in claim 4. Thus, claim 12 is believed in condition for allowance for the reasons noted above with respect to claim 4.

The remaining claims in the above application are dependent claims which depend either directly or indirectly from one of the above discussed independent claims and are therefore patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to the independent claims. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the above application are respectfully sought.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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